

Appl. No.: 10/709,678
Amdt. Dated: 12/14/2004
Reply to Office action of: 10/20/2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim 1 has been formatted to overcome the objection of the Examiner. In addition, Claim 1 has been amended to correct typographical, grammatical, and claim style errors. Claim 2 has been amended to rewrite it independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim, as well as to correct typographical, grammatical, and claim style errors. Claims 3 – 7 have been amended to correct typographical, grammatical, and claim style errors. No new matter has been introduced by these amendments to the claims.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okabe in view of May et al. Specifically, the Examiner states:

Okabe discloses a multi-wire connector (fig. 1) with interlocking device, said connector being of the type comprising a body (25) provided with a plurality of first connection terminals (col. 4 lines 34-35) connected to respective conductive wires (L) projecting from a top portion, which body (24) is susceptible of fitting through the lower portion of a cavity (unnumbered fig. 6a) of a base piece (23) provide with other such second connection terminals (20a) provided for coupling with said first connection terminals when the body is in coupling position within said cavity (fig. 6b), a lever (26) comprising a bridge (37) and arms (38) jointed at their ends with regard to opposite sides of the body by means of projections (32), so that said lever can rotate a certain angle (figures 6a to 6b), limited by stop configurations (39a), between an open position (fig. 6a) and a closed position (6b), locking configurations (fig. 6b) being arranged to immobilize the lever in said closed position, characterized in that means are provided for releasably interlocking the body in said coupling position in said cavity of the base piece (fig. 6b), which means comprise at least a first interlocking configuration (26b), integral to a portion of the lever (fig. 6b), and at [l]east a second interlocking configuration (27), integral to an inner side wall of the cavity (fig. 6b), in respective positions such that, when the body is introduced in the cavity with the lever in said open position (fig. 6a), said first and second interlocking configurations (26b & 27) do not interfere with each other, whilst when the lever is

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placed in the closed position, the body being in said coupling position, said first interlocking configuration (26b) interferes with said second interlocking configuration (27, fig. 6b), remaining both interlocked with each other, preventing extraction of the body from the cavity. Okabe discloses that the lever bridge confines said conductive wires (fig. 4). Okabe does not disclose that the lever bridge cooperates with a U shaped support. May discloses a "U"-shaped support (fig. 1 unnumbered) being arranged projecting from said body, where the bridge (30) cooperates with this support to confine wires forming a bundle.

At the time the invention was made it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Okabe to include a U shaped support for the wires as taught by May et al.

The modification for this modification of Okabe would have been to prevent shorting or cutting the wires by better bundling them.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. A fair reading of Okabe discloses a connector having a cam lever device to lock releasably the male and female portions of the connector together. When in the locked position the cam lever bridge is positioned to one end of the joined connector and does not provide a bundling of the wires, nor does it even encompass the wires in any manner. The Okabe reference also does not provide any suggestion, or the necessary impetus, of how to use the cam lever to assist in bundling the connected wires nor any desirability to do so. A fair reading of the May et al. reference discloses a connector having a U-shaped locking clip which can releasably lock the two portions of the connector together. In the May et al. teaching the male portion of the connector comprises a body that completely encloses the wires except for a wire exit opening located at one end of said male body. The U-shaped locking clip attaches to the male connector at the each leg end of said U-shaped locking clip and in the locked position the U-shaped locking clip bridge is located at the male connector end opposite that from which the wires protrude. Here again the locking clip does not encompass the wires nor is it possible for the locking clip to provide a wire bundling feature. Furthermore, because the May et al. reference teaches a male portion that encases the wires the necessary impetus to utilize the locking clip to bundle the wires does not exist.

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There is clearly no teaching, disclosure, or suggestion of using the bridge and/or legs of a locking clip to help bundle and protect the wires attached to the connector.

Clearly when viewed in this light neither the Okabe reference, nor the May et al. reference, disclose, teach, or fairly suggest Applicants present claimed invention. Furthermore, even if these references were combinable, which they are not, they do not disclose, teach, or fairly suggest Applicants' present claimed invention. Finally, neither reference provides the necessary impetus to combine and modify the teachings of these references to reach Applicants' present claimed invention.

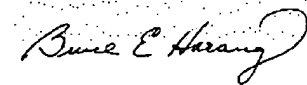
In compliance with Applicants' obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 Applicants affirm that the subject matter of all of the claims were, and are, commonly owned at the time all claimed inventions were made.

The Examiner has acknowledged that claims 2 – 7 are directed to allowable subject matter. Applicants thank the Examiner for his suggestions which have been incorporated into the amended claims herewith presented.

Applicants acknowledge the prior art made of record as pertinent, but not relied upon as a basis of rejection by the Examiner. Applicants make no further comment regarding this prior art.

In view of the remarks herein, and the amendments hereto, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully solicited. Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,



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